

THE GREAT HUNGER.

[B. M. is an old-world man living by his old-world methods in our era. We are fortunate in having secured a few reports of his talks to his intimate friends. The *Bhagavad-Gita* is the book he has mastered through long years of study and meditation ; but further, having lived according to its tenets more successfully than is generally possible, his thoughts breathe a peculiar fragrance. The papers have been translated from the vernacular ; it should be understood that they are not literal translations, and the translator has adhered more to ideas and principles than to words. Although B. M. knows English, his inspiration becomes impeded in employing that medium of expression, and so he prefers not to use it. We think our readers will find real inspiration in this series.—Eds.]

“The hungry man loseth sight of every other object but the gratification of his appetite, and when he is become acquainted with the Supreme, he loseth all taste for objects of whatever kind.”—*Bhagavad-Gita*, II. 59.

To hunger and thirst after righteousness, which our Christian brethren ought to do, following the advice of their teachers, was advocated many centuries earlier by the *Gita*. Food, either for the body, or mind or soul is the necessary basis—*upadhi* for experience, and the relish of food is dependent upon hunger and thirst. Over-eating is the order of this day and the beauty and utility of hunger are unknown among the well-to-do. It looks as if in former Yugas when Plenty blessed this land our own ancestors forgot to practise the rules of fasting. So Karma has overtaken people and to-day Poverty stalks the land. Our future would be more glorious than our past if our millions were taught the beneficent influence of adversity ; and who can do this save our well-to-do and educated leaders ? But most of them are educated in western ways and have forgotten the wisdom of their fathers, and their physical wealth increases their moral and spiritual poverty. Our India is trampled under foot not so much by foreigners as by her own sons, and in our daily personal lives we degrade her almost every hour. Not until we take to high-thinking which purifies us from our petty meannesses, small selfishnesses, constant immoralities, will India be really free. Our educated men and women, our natural leaders, will err in administration and in advice just as the British rulers blunder and give wrong advice, because they are beset with blemishes which result from false views of life, of state, of progress.

It is the individual who reforms himself who will be able to reform others ; he who rules himself, and he alone, is fit to govern the destinies of masses. The blind are leading the blind in most countries. The very measure of physical wealth and economic prosperity whereby countries are regarded as great or backward is false. If India does not get away from that basis of thought she will suffer, as rich and influential western states are suffering.

Just as food is the basis of life on the economic plane, so Knowledge is the basis on the plane of soul. There are poisons which kill the soul, there are intoxicants which madden the soul, there are foods which nourish the soul. There are systems of thought which produce

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